

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 760.

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1878.

PRICE 1½d.

MISCHIEVOUS PHILANTHROPY.

IN lately calling attention to the Life of George Moore, the merchant-prince and philanthropist, we ventured to express a doubt whether he acted judiciously in scattering his wealth with almost unheard-of profusion on the so-called charities of the metropolis. It was hard for us to make any remark of this kind on a man so generally estimable. Only a sense of duty to society, along with some experience, induced us to do so. If the press is worth anything at all, it should speak out when so great a matter is presented for discussion as the indiscriminate support of public charities to the extent of enfeebling self-dependence, and stamping out the cultivation of thrift and moral responsibility. Has it not become a painfully recognised fact that London, and in a lesser degree other cities, is overstocked with professed charities, and that thoughtful persons are beginning to get alarmed at the consequences? The establishing of charities of one kind or other has attained to the character of a regular business. Catching at some popular notion, two or three individuals set up a charity as they would set up a shop, or organise a Joint-stock Company (Limited) with a flamingly seductive prospectus. Securing a few names as patrons, the thing is done. The machine needs to be only well worked.

The practice of originating charities is a feature in modern society. According to the primary injunctions of Christianity, every man was to be his own almoner, that is to say, he was personally and privately to administer relief to the needy and deserving. In the New Testament we do not hear a word of great wholesale schemes of beneficence, with an array of secretaries and directors, and of men going about as collectors to gather money from subscribers, whose names, with the sums they respectively give, are guaranteed to be published to all the world. The original idea is totally laid aside. The givers know little or nothing personally of the receivers. It would be too much trouble to look after them, nor would it perhaps be pleasant to speak to them, and offer

a word of sympathy or admonition. The whole affair has degenerated into a system of tossing away money, which is left to be distributed by delegation on no one knows whom or how. Can these cold-hearted money gifts out of a superfluity be reconciled with the primary injunctions we have alluded to? They may be viewed as a make-shift, and that is all. The worst of it is, that charitable distribution being elevated into a trade, discourages habits of self-reliance, and creates the pauperism it is professedly designed to alleviate.

Under a consciousness of this growing mischief, have sprung up those supplementary societies which propose to act as a check on that species of imposture which preys on public credulity. How far they will answer the purpose, remains to be seen. As yet, they seem to have done some good. If they only put a stop to the concoction of new charities, they will deserve public confidence and support. To give a notion of the kind of trickery they are designed to circumvent, a little book has been prepared by Mr J. Hornsby Wright, one of the honorary secretaries of the St Marylebone Charity-Organisation Committee, and styled 'Thoughts and Experiences of a Charity-Organisationist.' We shall present a few of his experiences in an abbreviated form.

In a room in Lisson Grove there dwelt, or seemed to dwell, a family apparently in a pitiable degree of distress; the husband with a hacking cough, the wife emaciated, the children in wretchedness. All these appearances were put on to extort charity, and were successful as a means of living. It turned out that the family had two homes, one for day, the other for night. The night residence was in a street leading out of Oxford Street, and was a very comfortable abode. Hither, the family repaired after the fatigues of the day, to enjoy the contributions of the charitable societies they preyed upon. No one seeing them in their evening dress, in their evening quarters, could have imagined they were the same beings who seemed so woe-begone during the day. A number of similar anecdotes follow,

descriptive of the demoralisation produced by giving money to persons who have not properly earned it.

At a meeting held at St Pancras in 1877 for the purpose of establishing a committee of the Charity-Organisation Society, the Bishop of London made some remarks corroborative of the practice followed by gangs of impostors in having two houses—one in which to receive donations, and the other in which to spend their ill-gotten gains. His lordship said that money given without previous investigation, instead of relieving human misery, increases vice and beggary; for the impostors find it very easy to have different places of abode, and receive three, or four, or five families' allowances from the various agencies. 'It is easy to conceive that they thus have the means of obtaining larger incomes than they could receive if they were to devote themselves assiduously to the paths of honest industry. And can you conceive this going on within sight of the labouring people among whom the impostors dwell without deteriorating the honesty of that population? When men—honest working-men—see another man, living in the same rank of life as themselves, obtaining more comforts by idleness than they can obtain by industry, and learn, perhaps, that this is done by receiving visits from societies, they, too, are ready to follow the example, and independence is broken down. It is a sorrowful thing when a working-man among working-men finds that the wages of mendicancy are better than the wages of honest industry, for he is tempted to continue the downward course, in which he tempts others; and in nine cases out of ten from that downward course there is no return. But this is not the only evil. People who have commenced life as good givers are hardened into an opposite course when they come to investigate cases brought before them, and find only one reliable case out of about thirty. Discovery of the deceit practised makes one have a growing distrust of human nature, and so we suspect everybody of being dishonest until we prove them to be honest. Thus persons, after giving large sums, when they have made these discoveries, feel that it is better to leave poverty to its legal relief than to run the risk of being thus imposed upon. Having seen all these influences at work, I have become interested in the work proposed by this association,' &c.

Mr Hornsby Wright narrates some curious cases connected with Begging-letter Impostors. In 1874, he says, the Charity-Organisation Society came into possession of thirty-four street Directories, that had belonged to a gang of these impostors. On the Directories were five different marks opposite names, each mark having a distinct meaning. A short dash meant 'Doubtful,' or 'Not called on before.' A cross signified 'Good,' or 'Likely to give.' A star was 'Very good,' or 'Very likely to give.' A round O signified 'Has given something recently.' An O with a line across it meant 'Has given something recently, and will give again if called on.' The members of the gang are said to have picked up on an average five pounds apiece weekly.

No abuse is on so widely spread a scale as that connected with Dispensaries and Hospitals. There seems to be absolutely no shame in trying to procure medicines, or medical assistance, for nothing. Ladies of rank are known to dress themselves shabbily in order to get medicine gratuitously at a

Dispensary. The Hospitals are crowded with people who are capable of paying a fee to a doctor. In many cases, physicians are to blame for the lavish way they encourage free consultations. The writer of the book before us recalls attention to the well-known case of the late Dr Wardrop and the nobleman who imposed on him as a pauper. 'The doctor had for many years given advice to "poor people" at his house in Charles Street: he discontinued the practice after the following occurrence. Returning one morning from a patient to whom he had been summoned at an early hour, he observed alighting from a coroneted carriage a shabby old man, whom he recognised as one of his gratuitous morning patients. He made a detour, and returning, learned from the footman that it was the Earl of —. By-and-by, when the sham pauper was ushered in, in his turn, the doctor addressed him by name, and demanded as many guineas as he had made visits; which under threat of exposure, the noble deceiver reluctantly paid.' The writer adds: 'Of scores of applicants to the Children's Hospital, whom our inquiries have proved to be utterly ineligible for gratuitous relief, no mean proportion have sneeringly said: "Well, no matter; we can get what we want at the — Hospital without any of this bother."'

It will be recollected with what zeal George Moore went about gathering money from his neighbours on behalf of his pet charitable institution, the Royal Free Hospital—an hospital free to all without any letters of 'recommendation'—such were his own words. Listen to what has been the upshot, as related by one of the faculty, Dr Fairlie Clark, on the subject: 'An inquiry lately instituted at the Royal Free Hospital shewed that forty-nine per cent. of the out-patients were in a position to contribute towards their own medical relief; and the same has been proved by investigations carried on at the Children's Hospital during the last two years. For practical purposes, we may say that half the applicants at London Hospitals could afford a few shillings a year for what they are now seeking in *forma pauperum*.' Philanthropists of the George Moore type cannot too soon take facts of this kind to heart. In their eagerness to do good, they appear to be entirely forgetful of the fact that every fresh charity adds to the Power of Draw; that, besides lowering the self-dependence of residents who take advantage of the offered beneficence, it attracts, as if by gravitation, idly inclined families from distant quarters, and so aids in filling the town with a pauperised and dissolute population. If not actually demoralised on arrival, these strangers are made so by the innumerable contrivances to render them thriftless and abandoned. Nothing is left undone to pollute their moral sensibilities, nor can all the efforts of clerical ministration do more than mitigate the evils which well-meaning people are habitually and unintentionally cultivating. Very hard is it that the industriously disposed inhabitants in our large cities are to be embarrassed by crowds of paupers and ne'er-do-weels through a headlong course of mischievous Philanthropy, which, to give it its proper name, is a system of wanton cruelty.

According to late accounts, twenty-eight hospitals in the metropolis are urgently in want of funds. This will not create surprise. The free admission to hospitals is overdone. A reform

in the system is clearly required, in the interests of society. Let the benevolently disposed begin to encourage frugality and self-exertion among the classes who are at present indiscriminately impoverished by accepting medical assistance gratuitously. Instead of attracting many of these classes to free Hospitals and free Dispensaries that are supported with difficulty, they should make a reasonable effort to induce them to co-operate in establishing institutions on the Provident principle, by which, at a comparatively trifling cost per annum, they would be entitled to insure medical assistance for themselves on all needful occasions. Sanatoria, or medical boarding establishments, of different classes, somewhat on the plan of the Parisian *Maisons de Santé*, would, we think, be a useful appendage to all our large towns. The promotion of such institutions, however, would hardly meet the approval of that wild order of Philanthropists who are bent on pauperising everybody and everything.

In *The Times* of May 2, a correspondent (C. E. Trevelyan) pointedly calls attention to the impropriety of indiscriminate free medical treatment, as exemplified in the metropolis. He says: 'The central fact is that we have hitherto attempted to provide medical treatment on a purely eleemosynary footing for the entire working-class, and a considerable portion of the lower middle-class, population of London, and that this is a greater burden than private charity can bear. A vast multitude is encouraged to throw itself for medical aid on a few central points. Hence overcrowded waiting-rooms; the exhaustion of the strength of the patients by delay; mutual infection among large numbers of persons brought into close contact in a susceptible state; the vitiation of the air of the hospitals themselves; and more than all, the mockery of medical relief, owing to the impossibility of giving sufficient time to each case. There is also a great misdirection and waste of charitable funds from the notorious fact that the out-patient departments are largely used by persons who can well afford to pay something for their medical treatment. The medical profession is deprived of its just and necessary remuneration, and our people are educated to improvident and mendicant habits, being entirely relieved, as regards this requirement of civilised life, from all necessity for forethought and thrift.' This is exactly the argument we have here and elsewhere been trying to bring under public attention.

There is another view of the matter. Has it never occurred to persons of a reflective turn of mind, that the profuse and reckless dispensation of charity on very many who rely on this mode of existence, is contrary to the clear demands of moral retribution? Every departure from rectitude is destined by an imprescriptible natural law to bring its own punishment. A want of thrift is followed by poverty. A shameful neglect of duties brings remorse, if not some more expressive visitation. In the ancient classic superstition, that there is a Nemesis which executes the decrees of a strict retributive Providence, there is a glimmering of Divine Truth. We can no more escape from the effects of wrongdoing than we can from the sickness and pain resulting from a neglect of the laws of health. Inconsiderate Philanthropists have set themselves to overturn or neutralise this expiatory principle

in the moral world. The prodigal who spends all in riotous living is to be coddled, pampered, and sympathised with. The wretch who yields to the basest passions is to be put on a level with the man or woman who, through many a weary year of good conduct and pinching thrift, has supported a good name and cherished a conscience void of offence. Is this practice of confounding right and wrong consistent with common-sense or expediency. Is it fair, and likely to be beneficial? To one who remembers the severities of the criminal law sixty years since, the present penalties, bounding to an opposite extreme, seem little better than a farce. Philanthropy has turned the moral world upside down. A monster of iniquity knocks down, kicks, and tramples on his wife, till she has hardly the breath of life left in her, and it has been the practice to let him off with a month's imprisonment—that is to say, to be indulged with excellent board and lodging for a month as the appropriate punishment for his heinous offence. But the indignity? The scoundrel who behaves so has no sense of indignity. He is only alive to physical suffering, and from that the law, as it now stands, strangely exempts him. His sin meets with no adequate retribution. The decrees of Providence are reversed.

Such are some of the conspicuous results of inconsiderate benevolence. With the best intentions, a wrong is done to society. We could wish it to be otherwise. Relief and sympathy are of course due to sufferers by misfortunes over which they have had no control; and it would be coming back to something like primary injunctions to succour these to the best of our ability. Charity of this kind will ever command a blessing. It is only the abuse of charity, as developed in great trading associations, to the extent of breaking down self-reliance and encouraging profligacy, that merits general reprobation.

W. C.

HELENA, LADY HARROGATE.

CHAPTER XLIII.—AT THE 'OLD VINE.'

'NAME of Parsons, sir? Certainly. Mr Parsons, which he is an old customer, uses this house, and just now he has the parlour to himself.' So said the ringleted barmaid of the *Old Vine* in Walsall Street, Euston Road, as she emerged from her bower of bliss, festooned with jugs, lemons, bright glasses, and burnished pewter, and bristling with the ivory-tipped handles of beer-engines, to shew the stranger who had inquired for Mr Parsons, and was presumably his friend, the way to the *Old Vine's* best parlour.

A notable hostelry in its way was this same *Old Vine*, the very name of which had a respectable flavour of quasi-antiquity, for it takes some years to grow a vine, and a good many more before that twining and tough-limbed plant can be said to have attained to the dignity of age. Probably some ancient inn or tavern had been standing on that site when the Oxford fields and Gallows meadows, with the miry lanes adjacent, were yet a happy hunting-ground for bludgeon-bearing footpads, and unsafe lounging-places for the prudent citizen coming home from his excursion to the suburbs.

The *Old Vine*, whether an aboriginal house of entertainment or not, had never laid itself out for the modern adornments that are usually thought necessary to attract custom. There was no fine front decorated with mock-marble pilasters, paint, and gilding, no display of plate-glass, no imposing array of lamps. The small-paned windows and white walls were inscribed in narrow letters with quaint legends having reference to 'neat cordials,' 'fine wines,' and the like, which almost seemed to take the observant wayfarer back to the Tom-and-Jerry days. And there was one announcement less immediately intelligible, which seemed to possess a semi-religious character, since it hinted at 'An Ordinary on Sundays at two o'clock.'

The *Old Vine*, dingy, commonplace, and unattractive as it might appear, never seemed to lack custom. In its unpretentious way it thrived remarkably well. It was not a 'brewer's house,' and as such was freed from the vassalage to which many a public of comelier aspect has to submit. But although the *Old Vine* bought its beer where it liked, instead of being constrained to promulgate the strong ale, mild ale, and 'entire' of one mighty vintocrat, the *Old Vine* did a good business in the brood of John Barleycorn. There were landlords hard by whose sumptuous establishments outglittered the modest outside of the *Old Vine*, yet who spoke of the house with a resentful respect. 'Draw a power of beer, they do, let alone sperrits. Ten pound, oftener twelve! And they buy as they choose. It's along of the Staffordshire-men that stand by 'em so.'

That was the secret of the flourishing of the *Old Vine*. Its roots were struck deep in that occult sentiment of local patriotism that everywhere clings closer to the heart than does that grand Imperial patriotism about which leading articles discourse so nobly. The *Old Vine* was simply a bit of Staffordshire transplanted to London. It took in the *Hanley Guardian*, the *Rugley Argus*, the *Tamworth Times*, and the *Etruria Standard*, to say nothing of the *Stafford Times* and the *Lichfield Argus*. It was the Nailers' house of call. It was the Potters' city of refuge. Round it rallied, when cast into the unfamiliar world of London, the men of clay and the men of iron, the lovers of dog—and perhaps dwarf—fights, the pounders of wives, the grimy, liquor-loving, unconventional population of the Black Country.

For all that, the *Old Vine* was not by any means a noisy or disreputable public-house. The Staffordshire-men who frequented it might be often enough rough-spoken and roughly behaved; but London produced on them a tranquillising effect, and they were quite as docile as though Suffolk or Sussex or Somerset had been their native county. It was enough for them that landlord and landlady, barmaid and barman, and the very pot-boys, were 'Staffordshire to the backbone,' and that the old accent, the old provincialisms, and the old gossip were to be heard within its doors.

The supporters of the *Old Vine* were wont to say boastfully in praise of its situation, that it was 'within a jiffy of everywhere.' It certainly was very near to the Euston Station of the London and North-western line, and an active man might have covered the distance between Walsall Street

and King's Cross in a small indeterminate space of time which might not inaptly have been defined as a jiffy. Otherwise it was not so easy to see how the *Old Vine* came to be within easy reach of all places of business and pleasure.

It was the dead-time, in a commercial sense, of the day, and the roaring trade of the *Old Vine* was proportionably at a low ebb. The outer bar contained but some eighteen customers; the young lady who presided over the bottle and jug department had leisure to plunge deeply into the chapters of *The Mysteries of Belgrave Square*, or *Marquis and Milliner* (illustrated, at one penny per number); while of the three parlours the 'best' had no other tenant than Mr Parsons, better known to Lord Harrogate whom the barmaid now ushered in, as Inspector Drew. Why the inspector frequented the *Old Vine*, and whether he was a Staffordshire-man, or only feigned to be one, and lastly, why he had there conciliated golden opinions under a fictitious name, were questions which he alone would have been able to solve.

'Glad to see you, Jones,' said the inspector very heartily, rising as Lord Harrogate entered.—'We'll take a pint of sherry, brown and old, if you please, miss,' he added parenthetically; and then expressed his delight at the circumstance that Mr Jones was looking 'right well,' and that travelling seemed to agree with him. The pint of old brown sherry, the tint of which undoubtedly answered to the order, as the age too may have done, was produced with business-like promptitude; and having solemnly filled both glasses, the inspector thus guardedly entered upon the subject that was uppermost in his thoughts.

'Think I see my way, my lord, to making a good job of it—really I do,' said the detective, slowly closing one eye as he sipped the dusky amber of the sherry that he held up between him and the mellow daylight. 'At first I simply thought I was picking your lordship's pocket; but now I feel as if we could get a true bill from the grand jury when we ask for one.'

'You wished to see me with reference to the card, or rather the half-card, which I left in your possession?' said Lord Harrogate.

In lieu of a verbal reply, the inspector extracted from an inner coat-pocket a flat tin case, and opening it, drew forth something heedfully wrapped in silver-paper, and unwrapping it, disclosed the treasured scrap of pasteboard. Then he produced his pocket magnifying glass, adjusted it, and professed it to Lord Harrogate.

'My eyes are tolerably strong ones,' answered the young patrician, smiling as he took up the card.

'They had need to be, my lord, if you mean to see anything without the glass,' said the detective in a tone of pique.

'I can make out nothing—nothing,' said Lord Harrogate, after a lengthened survey of the fragment of card. 'A slight smear or indentation in the left corner, I think I saw.'

'Tackle the smear, my lord, with the help of this,' returned the inspector, again offering his horn-rimmed series of lenses. 'I've trimmed the focus to what, according to my fancy, would suit.'

'It is certainly pencil-writing, very dim, faint, and small; but sufficiently legible, with the aid of good glasses,' said Lord Harrogate, after long

scrutiny of the card. 'You were right too, Inspector Drew, about the word. It is "Sandston" beyond a doubt.'

'Sandston it is, my lord,' replied the detective, with a slight smile of self-complacency. 'The wonder of the thing is of course that pencil-marks, so easy to be rubbed out, should have lasted so long, or leastways so it seems. We of the Force know by experience what a good friend to us the pencil is, in the way of leaving its writing plain to be read, when ink, on account of the acids, has faded from damp and mildew. Once we got a verdict against a forger, all because of his betting-book and the pencilled entries in it, months after he had chucked it and all his papers into the Thames that ran by his villa at Roehampton.'

Inspectors of even the detective branch of that small and active army of police which intervenes between quiet householders and the predatory classes, share the common weaknesses of mortal men. Lord Harrogate saw that this superior officer of the drilled and disciplined constabulary was as vain of his discovery as though he had been the finder of a new metal or a new star, and resolved not to cloud the policeman's joy by any depreciatory criticism.

'It is lucky,' he said, 'that the card came into good hands—professional hands, I mean. A layman like myself could have made nothing of it.'

'Umph! perhaps not!' said the inspector, coughing behind his broad hand. 'Always excepting Mr Bobbins.—Your lordship never heard of Mr Bobbins? That's odd; but to be sure he did his best to keep out of the newspapers; and the reporters, except on grand occasions at the Central Criminal Court, didn't so much as hint at him. Gentleman of property, my lord, was Mr Bobbins, who took to police business as a duck takes to the water, out of pure love for it. Wonder-ful captions he made, of burglars chiefly; so that our best officers got to be a'most jealous, they did, of Mr Bobbins.'

'He grew tired of it perhaps—or married, and found other objects of interest?' asked Lord Harrogate, amused at the policeman's enthusiasm.

'Died, my lord,' answered Drew solemnly. 'Never recovered a trial at the Old Bailey in which he was a witness, and the cross-examination by Mr Serjeant Blathers, who was counsel for the prisoner. "It's my nature," said poor Bobbins, "to attend to matters of this sort, and I can't help it." "Then, sir," roared Blathers (the Serjeant was a big red-faced man with a bullying manner, and a voice that made you wince, whoever you were), "you are no better than a monomaniac, and ought to be locked up as one. Your friends, if you have any friends, should know better than to leave you at large, Mr Bobbins. An amateur thief-taker! Before long perhaps we shall come across an amateur hangman! Who can tell, Mr Bobbins, what your next craze may be?"—It broke poor Bobbins's heart. It did indeed, my lord. Never held up his head once since that day.'

Lord Harrogate waited to give time for the subsidence of the inspector's natural emotions at the recollection of the untimely end of this brilliant volunteer, and then returned to the card.

'The word "Sandston,"' he said, 'I should take to be a hurried memorandum. I agree with you,

however, that it points out the most probable field for a fresh discovery.'

By this time Inspector Drew, with whom the melting mood was rare and of brief duration, was himself again, and he proceeded, glancing now and then at the card, as if to make sure that it had not evaporated into thin air, to express his opinion on the subject.

'We guess, don't we, my lord,' he began argumentatively, 'that whoever did the actual job of stealing the child—since I suppose we may take it for granted she was stolen—was a commonish sort of person, not too well educated, now?'

Lord Harrogate agreed with this preliminary proposition. 'Gipsies, chimney-sweepers, and beggars,' he remarked, smiling, 'are the only kidnappers of children of whom I have heard since the days of the Burkers, and none of these can be suspected of much erudition.'

'But neither a chimney-sweep nor a cadger nor yet a gipsy,' returned the inspector with perfect seriousness, 'wrote down that word in pencil. It was a gentleman wrote that. And I should like to know, my lord, if not too great a liberty, whether your lordship never met with a handwriting similar to that before?'

Now, it had instantly, on seeing the pencilled word, occurred to Lord Harrogate that it was in the handwriting of Sir Sykes Denzil; but he felt as yet unwilling to mention the name of the presumed writer. Inspector Drew, who was quick to read faces as well as half-effaced inscriptions, did not press the question, but proceeded: 'You see, my lord, all turns on whether the job was a put-up job or not. I think it was. There are vagrants of course who would make no bones of snapping up a pretty bit of a child likely to bring 'em in money, if they met with her in a lane somewhere, alone. But they'd be scared by the idea of a real quality child, at play in her mamma's own garden, where, for aught they knew, maids and men might come running at a cry. It took a determined sort of chap, with a strong motive for what he was about, to risk it.'

'That motive you conclude was gain of course?' observed Lord Harrogate, as the detective came to a pause.

'Must have been gain,' said the inspector dogmatically. 'And tidily too, the work must have been paid for. Now, it seems to me that this little word "Sandston" was pencilled down on the scrap of card by the paymaster of the actual scoundrel who undertook the business. Your lordship can guess why?'

'I suppose, to refresh the man's memory, in case he should forget the name of the place whither he was to convey the stolen child,' said Lord Harrogate, after a moment's thought. 'We are assuming of course that the infant was carried off, not drowned.'

'Well—we may, my lord,' answered the inspector, with the assurance of an expert. 'It wouldn't be easy, really now, to get any man, even the worst, to kill a smiling, innocent bit of a thing of that age; indeed it wouldn't. There's an old hag here and there,' he added, 'would be less particular; but whoever scaled that terrace-bank from the river must have been an active man. No; the little one left that place safe and sound, rely on it.'

'And you think,' said Lord Harrogate, as a host

of sudden hopes crowded on him, 'that we shall find her at Sandston, or a clue to her?'

'Find a clue to her, my lord, we almost certainly shall,' returned the detective earnestly, 'if we do but look long enough and hard enough. Murder will out, they say; and not that alone, but other crime, of whatever sort it may be. If your lordship will be at the Shoreditch Station at 9.30 to-night, we can travel down to Sandston—not together, though—and set about our inquiries in the morning without loss of time.'

DEMONSTRATIONS IN COOKERY.

In teaching cookery by practical demonstration, a kitchen is necessary, where students can work out the recipes with their own hands. The School at South Kensington is the only one which confers diplomas; but many smaller ones are established in various parts of the country, and conducted by competent teachers. Most of these schools combine the advantages of teaching both by demonstration and practice; and thus only can cookery be taught effectually. However, when practice is impossible, demonstration may do good work; and an effort is being made to bring instruction within the reach of poor and busy women, who could afford neither time nor money to attend schools for practice.

The Committee of the School for Cookery has authorised the lady-superintendent to open cookery classes in districts where she can obtain the use of a suitable room and gas, on condition that forty pupils will take tickets at five shillings each for a course of ten lessons in plain cookery, and twenty pupils will take tickets at a guinea each for a course of ten lessons in middle-class cookery. When by the sale of the above number of tickets, a reasonable prospect of success is given, the school supplies all that is necessary, and takes the risk of loss or profit. Programmes are drawn out for both courses, in which the subjects are admirably selected and arranged. To the lessons in plain cookery, twopence is charged for admission and sixpence for reserved seats; for a single lesson in middle-class cookery two shillings and sixpence is charged. These latter are adapted for ladies with some knowledge of the art, who wish to obtain information about special dishes or improved methods; and cooks would find profit here when they are intelligent enough to be good listeners.

Many clergymen have placed their rooms at the service of the Committee, and classes have started in all directions, at some places for plain cookery only. These lessons, lasting two hours, are necessarily given by demonstration. The teacher cooks five or six dishes before the students, explaining the reason of every process; and naming the ingredients required, she shews how to prepare and combine them, and gives many practical hints. A gas stove is used; and an excellent one can be bought for four guineas which will boil four pots at once besides baking and roasting. The ingredients are prepared upon any available table, and

make-shifts are unavoidable in many instances. Some rooms are far better fitted for this purpose than others, though unfortunately no room appears too small, for these demonstrations are not so largely attended as they ought to be. This failure we attribute chiefly to the dislike of innovation which characterises certain British matrons. The cookery, however bad, which has served them for years, may prevail till the end, rather than that they should attempt to effect an improvement. We must rather look to the rising generation for reform in our national cookery; and this fact is so generally acknowledged, that lessons in cookery are becoming in many places an essential part of school education for girls in all classes of society.

The staff teacher at Kensington who gives the demonstrations is always accompanied by a kitchen-maid from the School, and often also by a teacher in training, who assists in the various operations. Lessons in plain cookery are more in demand in the neighbourhood of London than elsewhere—those of a higher class obtaining favour in country places where ladies reside who cannot conveniently attend the school at South Kensington. The number of staff teachers being limited, many excellent teachers are separated from the School, and carry on the work successfully in various towns in England and Scotland. Ladies who wish to promote the interests of cookery can do much good by forming these classes in their own neighbourhoods, and many energetic helpers are to be found outside the School.

The interest of the demonstration depends mainly upon the ability of the demonstrator. It is not enough to cook a given number of dishes in two hours without mistakes. The teacher should sustain the interest of her audience, not by an uninterrupted flow of language, as in a lecture, but by apt and comprehensive remarks regarding the food, or the process in cookery under consideration at the time. Many demonstrators commit the mistake of speaking too quickly for the sense of their words to be easily grasped, or for notes of the lesson to be taken accurately. Much obscurity is avoided when the recipe is first given out to be copied into the note-books of the hearers, the demonstrator afterwards shewing how to prepare the requisite ingredients, and then how to combine them so as to form a certain dish.

During the preparation she may find time to say a good deal about the various articles of food; and while she is frying or boiling, as the case may be, she can give general rules for the perfection of that process. Sometimes, during the progress of the lesson, she may have an opportunity of conveying a slight knowledge of theory; but she must be careful not to involve herself in a labyrinth of words containing little meaning. To attempt high flights and find that one's wings are clipped, is most humiliating; one had better not soar without the sustaining power of well-defined thought. In demonstrations, as the name implies, the teacher *shews* how things are done, in order that she may be copied; however, in these demonstrations it frequently happens that very little is seen, because the students sit too far back or the table is not placed to advantage. For this reason, it is desirable that the demonstrator should audibly

describe what she is doing, so as to bring the operation before the mental eyes of those students who cannot see the details perfectly.

When school children are present, it adds much to the interest of the lesson to question them upon what they heard on a previous occasion; and fresh questions may be framed for them to answer next time. A special programme, consisting of twenty lessons, has been made for the use of schools, by which instruction may be given in a more simple form. This demonstration-work gives much scope to an intelligent teacher, for many lessons may be conveyed beyond the actual cookery. Few of our poorer neighbours understand the right meaning of economy, the word implying to them nothing but stinginess or scanty fare. To object to the waste of bones or fat, would appear to them the extreme of meanness. To expel this pernicious notion, it ought to be the duty of every teacher to inculcate the maxim, that economy is the art of extracting the utmost amount of nourishment from every scrap of food, and to shew them how they can make wholesome and tasty dishes from bones and dry pieces of meat, and how the fat can be best utilised.

It has sometimes been argued that we cannot teach cookery to the poor unless we use cooking utensils similar to theirs. However, many ideas which look well in theory fail when reduced to practice, and we think that this is one of them. We ought to shew people the *best* way to cook; and though it is inexpedient to give demonstrations in the very poorest cookery to mixed audiences, we may by suggestions adapt our lessons to the wants of all. The uneducated classes, knowing nothing of general principles, can seldom educe conclusions, and will not substitute one thing for another unless they are told what might be done under less favourable circumstances. There is much prejudice to be overcome; but they are nevertheless alive to the persuasive influence of a genial teacher who recognises their needs and makes due allowance for their shortcomings. A public teacher must have in a measure the true sympathies which can transplant fitting lessons into the minds of others, and adapt her teaching to the peculiar needs of the learners.

Originality is also an essential element in good teaching: the words should be of the simplest and to the point, and no mere imitation of another's ideas. As Goethe said: 'There are many echoes in the world, but few voices.' Eccentricity, which is a distortion of originality, should be avoided; and with so all-important a subject as cookery, there should be nothing comical in the lesson, though a touch of humour may sometimes be thrown in as a *bonne bouche*. It is necessary to speak distinctly in giving demonstrations, and not let the voice sink too low. A well-modulated voice is a great desideratum. One hardly knows why it is so much more pleasant to listen to some talkers than to others, for charm does not lie in mere cleverness.

An experienced demonstrator may be detected by the *ease* with which she cooks and serves up her dishes. She shews no agitation, no hurry towards the end, such as one sees in those who are new to the work; so that one really imagines that the task is as easy as she makes it appear. We may say that ease is perfection. Ease of manner is the perfection of good-breeding; ease

in conversation flows from a well-stored mind; and the style of composition which seems so easy and unstudied is often the outcome of ripe intelligence and the mark of a practised hand.

THE HOUSE IN THE JUNGLE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.—THE PICTURE.

I HAD formed a resolve in my own mind during that short conversation with my interesting protégée, and now without a moment's hesitation, I addressed myself thus to her uncle: 'Do you intend to keep that mare, Mr Lorton?'

'I am afraid I shall not be able to,' he replied surlily; 'not one of those fools of servants dares go near her.'

'Would it be impertinent in me to inquire how much you would sell her for?'

He looked at me attentively, then replied suavely: 'Not at all. I should ask four hundred rupees, the price I paid for her.'

I knew he was lying; but I did not attempt to bargain with him. I wanted the chestnut mare; and though in general an economical man, was quite prepared now to throw away a considerable sum of money, in order that Miss Lorton's mind might be set at rest. 'I will give you four hundred for her,' said I.

Mr Lorton at once closed with this offer; the bargain was concluded, and the chestnut mare became mine.

'Will you take her with you to-night?' he asked. 'How will you manage?'

'I will lead her,' replied I, 'till I meet a coolie; then he can bring her on.'

Norris Lorton seemed pleased with the plan; and the question of payment having been satisfactorily settled between us, I bade him good-night, and started homewards, riding very slowly, and leading my newly purchased steed by a halter. I soon met some coolies, one of whom, for a few annas, consented to take charge of the mare, which in the course of half an hour or so arrived at my house without, to my inexpressible relief, having done any damage by the way.

It soon became known throughout the station that I had purchased the chestnut whose hoof had trampled out the life of a fellow-man, for the tale of the inquest was soon public property. Nothing, however, in the inquiry transpired about Norris Lorton. The English runaway sailor did not appear, so that the only evidence given was that of the other syce, who averred that he and his companion were travelling to Calcutta, where the horses were to be sold; they had turned off the high-road on to the race-course, in order to cut grass for their beasts, and then the accident had happened. I knew the whole account to be false; but my pledge of secrecy had been given, and I held my peace.

Various remarks, neither kind nor charitable, were made upon my bravado, as they termed it, in keeping so dangerous an animal; but I cared nought just then for the opinion of my neighbours, though in general anxious to be thought well of. Miss Lorton was safe from one danger, and I was satisfied.

Friday came round again. At six P.M., instead of taking part in a game of Badminton, which was going on in the club grounds, I was inside the building, looking through a large pile of last year's *Pall Mall Weekly Budgets*. After about half an hour's search, I found what I wanted: 'On the 20th of June, suddenly, Osmond, youngest son of the late Stephen Lorton, aged 48.' I then looked at the Shipping Intelligence in the same paper, and saw among the list of passengers by the Star-line steamer *Candace*, of the 22d instant, bound for Calcutta, 'Mr Norris Lorton and daughter.' But this was not all; the name next on the same list was Mrs Francis Horley, whom I knew to be my first-cousin, the wife of a merchant in Calcutta; and it all at once occurred to me that I might gain from her some information respecting the Lortons. Before I left the club that night I had made up my mind to go down and call upon my cousin in Calcutta the following Sunday.

The interview that night with Sibyl Lorton was very brief. She met me at the accustomed spot, but told me that she would have to hurry back to the house as soon as possible, for Norris Lorton had only gone out riding, saying he should be back in an hour; so that I had only time to shew her the notice of her father's death in the newspaper which I had brought with me, and to promise to meet her again the following Friday. Her dread of her uncle would not permit her to remain a moment longer.

Sunday came. As soon as my daily duties were over, I journeyed to Calcutta, and, arrived there, repaired instantly to my cousin's house, where I found her at home, and fortunately alone, as I was able then to converse more freely upon the subject which had brought me to her. As we had not met since her arrival in India, she having been paying a series of visits in the North-West Provinces, it was but natural that I should ere long ask her a few questions about the voyage from England.

'By-the-by,' said I, when she had told me that the weather had been stormy, and the passengers more or less afflicted by the usual malady, 'did you come out with a Mr and Miss Lorton?'

'Yes,' she exclaimed, looking rather surprised. 'Do you know them?'

'I know the name,' returned I evasively. 'What were they like?'

Mrs Horley looked a little curiously at me, I thought. 'Well,' she answered with a smile, 'Miss Lorton was the most peculiar girl I ever met in my life.'

'Indeed,' said I eagerly. 'In what way?'

Again my cousin glanced at me sharply ere she went on: 'I have no idea, Eustace, what you may know about the Lortons, but if they are any friends of yours, I am very sorry.'

'Why,' inquired I a little stiffly.

'From what I saw of them during the voyage, I can only form one of two opinions: either that Mr Lorton is a very wicked cruel man, or that his poor daughter is what every one on board believed her to be—mad.'

'Ah!' was my mental comment. 'Suppose this should be the case what a fool I should look!'

'Eustace,' said my cousin, seeing I did not answer, 'you have seen these Lortons; I can tell it by your face; you men can never keep a secret. Confess, have the beauty and misfortunes of Miss Lorton touched your heart?'

'No!' replied I earnestly; 'not so bad as that. I believe the girl has been infamously treated by all her relations, and that her sufferings may have affected her brain.'

'How and where came you to know them? Are they living in Mooderland?'

'No; I have seen and conversed with them both, but am bound by a solemn promise not to reveal where they are.'

'Well, Eustace,' said Mrs Horley, smiling, 'a promise is of course sacred, and I will not ask you to break it. Perhaps you would like to hear my account of them.'

I eagerly assented; so she continued: 'In the first place, the captain of the *Candace* was, in my opinion, very much to blame in allowing the girl to be brought on board at Southampton. I was on deck at the time, and saw her, supported by her father, who said that she had been very ill, and that a sea-voyage had been recommended for her. The captain was anxious to start, and the doctor was engaged down below with an hysterical old lady, or else perhaps they would have seen and noticed what I did, her extraordinary appearance.'

'What did she look like?' inquired I.

'To tell you the truth,' responded my cousin gravely, 'her looks and actions gave me the idea that she was under the influence of drink. She was quite unable to stand alone, had almost to be carried down the companion-ladder; and when, a few minutes after, I went into the saloon, I found her lying on one of the benches, in a slumber so heavy that I am sure it was not natural. I did not see her again then until we reached Malta. She looked rather better, but was still very strange in her manners. One or two of the passengers would have it that she was given to drink, but the rest said she was mad. I asked her once where she was going; she told me she did not know. "She had been taken away from Vivian," she said. Just then her father came up, and led her down below again. One stormy day after we had left Suez, she had been on deck a little while, and attempted to descend the companion alone; she slipped and fell, cutting her head severely, and was laid up for the rest of the voyage. Unfortunately the ship-doctor was at the time unable to perform his duties, being prostrated by intermittent fever, so that the poor girl was nursed only by her father and the stewardess; and by the time we reached Calcutta, she looked far worse than she did at Southampton.'

'And you do not know what became of them afterwards?'

'No; they went away somewhere by train the same day. I expect you know where they are, Eustace,' said my cousin, laughing mischievously.

I made no reply to this insinuation, not wishing to get on dangerous ground, and after one or two unsuccessful attempts, contrived to change the conversation. But the events of the day were not over yet.

During tiffin (lunch), to which my cousin and I sat down *tête-à-tête*, Francis Horley not being expected till the evening, our conversation turned upon pictures, and my cousin exclaimed suddenly: 'By-the-by, Eustace, you must see the lovely picture Frank's father sent out to me last mail. I have not had it hung up yet. You are a judge

of paintings, I know; you must help me to find a place for it.'

I assented; and after tiffin, two servants brought the picture and laid it on the sofa in the drawing-room. After a little consultation and one or two experiments, we found a good light; and my cousin wishing it to be hung up instantly, I performed the task myself.

'It looks lovely—does it not?' said she, as I stepped back to have a better view of the picture, which had hitherto appeared little better than an indistinct mass of colouring. The subject was well known, one that painters have frequently handled: 'Elaine lying Lifeless in the Funeral Barge.' I recognised it at once; then I could not conceal a start; for the face of the dead woman was strangely familiar. True, as I had seen it in the moonlight by the banks of the Dum, it differed much from the painting before me. I had not seen the long fair locks which, in the picture, almost shrouded Elaine's pale still face. The features of the dead had a peaceful, calm expression, which in the living was one of restless longing and fear; and yet they were the same: they were Sibyl Lorton's.

'Who painted this picture?' I asked.

'I have forgotten his name,' replied Mrs Horley carelessly. 'Some young fellow who was going abroad. Let me see—what was his name? Something to do with Tennyson.'

'Was it Vivian? Vivian Clare?'

'Yes; that was the name. Old Mr Horley said he could not understand why it was rejected for the Royal Academy; he thought it a fine painting.—What do you think of it?' went on my cousin, seeing I did not speak.

'The likeness is excellent,' murmured I absently.

'What are you talking about, Eustace? The likeness?'

'Have you never seen that face before?' I asked.

'It does not seem altogether strange to me,' was the reply; 'but I cannot recall when or where I have seen it before.'

'Have you ever seen any one in so sound a sleep that it resembled death?'

Mrs Horley looked eagerly at me; then a light broke suddenly upon her, and she exclaimed: 'Miss Lorton! What could she have known of Mr Clare? Is it possible she could have meant him, when she said she had been taken away from Vivian?'

'Well,' replied I evasively, pointing to the picture, 'they must have been pretty well acquainted, for her to sit to him.'

'Ah yes,' returned my cousin compassionately. 'Poor girl, I suppose it pleased her. Mad people have strange fancies sometimes.'

I allowed my cousin to take this view of the case in silence, wishing to avoid any more questions; then as the time for my departure drew near, I asked her to grant me a favour.

'Anything in reason, Eustace.'

'Will you let me make a copy of that picture?'

'Certainly, if you wish it. How will you manage? Are you going to get the original model to sit to you?'

'I am going to copy,' I answered, rather stiffly, 'not design.'

My cousin looked curiously at me, but said nothing; and soon after I took my leave.

CHAPTER III. CONTINUED.—NORRIS LORTON IS BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH THE PICTURE.

Time passed on; and it was long before I saw Miss Lorton again. Rain set in earlier than usual that year; and by some strange ill-luck, it always seemed to rain heavier on a Friday night than any other in the week; thereby rendering it quite impossible either for me to ride to our appointed meeting-place, or for Miss Lorton to walk there. All my spare time now was devoted to the completion of the copy of 'Elaine.' Painting had always been a favourite occupation of mine, though I had never tried to earn my living by it; now I had another object in view. The picture when finished was to aid me in exposing Norris Lorton's villainy to the world and delivering his niece out of his hands. This work necessarily took me a long time. I could not trust entirely to memory; and my visits to Calcutta, though frequent enough to arouse the curiosity of my neighbours, were fewer than I should have wished them to be. However, I went down whenever the opportunity presented itself, greatly to the amusement of my cousin Mrs Horley, who declared that the picture had bewitched me; and at last, one day about the middle of November, I had the satisfaction of seeing my copy of 'Elaine' completed, and of hearing my cousin, to whom I shewed it, say that it was a very fair representation of the original in the drawing-room.

All this time I had fallen into disgrace with my neighbours in the station. I never went to the club, never played rackets, billiards, or Badminton, and seldom accepted any invitations to dinner; all my spare time was devoted to my picture; and such evenings as the weather permitted, I used to ride on the chestnut mare—now much sobered by constant exercise, and whom I had named 'Elaine'—by the river Dum, or past the house in the jungle, in the hope of again meeting Miss Lorton; but always without success. 'Stanmore is quite an altered man,' people would say; 'he used to be such a sociable pleasant young fellow at one time. We cannot think what has come over him.'

Any remark like the preceding one was very certain to be repeated sooner or later to me; but I cared little or nothing for the opinion of my neighbours just then; my thoughts were too much occupied with Sibyl Lorton's troubles, and with plans for rescuing her from the hands of her persecutors. This state of affairs went on till nearly Christmas, and then there was a change, which came about in this way. After a great deal of grave deliberation, I had formed a plan, the result of which shall be shewn presently. One Sunday evening I rode out on Elaine, and presented myself boldly at the doors of the house in the jungle and asked for Mr Lorton.

He was at home, and received me in the same room where, on a previous occasion, we had arranged the sale of the chestnut mare in my possession. We discoursed for some little time upon the politics of the day, after which I contrived to lead the conversation on to pictures; then rather suddenly I asked my host if he was a judge of paintings.

'Not particularly,' he replied. 'I know a good picture when I see it; that is all.'

'I wish you would give me your opinion upon one in my house,' said I.

'Indeed,' he asked, looking a little curiously at me. 'What is the subject?'

'The death of Elaine,' answered I, with assumed indifference. 'But it is on quite a small scale; about the size now of that engraving there.'

He started and changed colour when I said the word 'Elaine;' but glancing at the engraving on the wall which I pointed out to him, and of which the subject was 'Isaac and Rebecca,' he looked reassured, and replied lightly: 'I should be proud to oblige you, Dr Stanmore; but I do not see how I can come to your house. Your friends might surprise me there, and I am most desirous not to be seen. Perhaps you wonder at me?'

'Most of us, sir, have reasons for what we do,' said I hypocritically; 'yours, I am sure, must be good ones. But still, if you would honour me with a visit, I could certainly manage so that no one should know of it.'

'You are very good, Dr Stanmore. May I inquire how you propose to do it?'

'If you will come next Tuesday and dine with me, I will tell my servants that you have come from Calcutta; friends of mine often run up from there; they will see nothing unusual in your coming. There is a large dinner-party the same night at the Judge's house; all the station will be there, so there is no fear of your being seen by any one. Come, Mr Lorton; take compassion on me; say I may expect you?'

He hesitated a moment; then, to my secret delight, accepted the invitation.

'I shall look forward to Tuesday,' said I, as I prepared to take my departure. 'By-the-bye, how rude I am; I hope Miss Lorton is well?'

'Quite well, thank you,' replied he stiffly. 'She has been out walking, and is a little tired; otherwise she would have been glad to see you.'

Tuesday came; and punctually at half-past seven Norris Lorton and I sat down together at my dining-table. I had purposely deferred the examination of the picture till after the meal, feeling sure that the coming events of the evening were calculated rather to destroy than increase a man's appetite, and wishing to render affairs as pleasant as possible in the commencement. For myself, excitement prevented me from eating much, but I am conscious of drinking a great deal more wine than was my wont; perhaps this it was that gave me additional courage, for I do not think I am altogether a bold man by nature. At last the critical moment came. I led Norris Lorton into the small room which I had of late converted into a kind of studio, and where the picture still stood on the easel, the light being so arranged that the features of the dead maiden shone out clearly and distinctly; and their likeness to Sibyl Lorton would have struck the most casual observer, had he previously seen her.

'Now, Mr Lorton, your candid opinion, if you please.'

The moment his eyes fell on the picture, I saw that he turned deadly pale and his hands twitched nervously. I affected not to notice this, and repeated my question.

'This is your work?' said he hoarsely.

'It is,' I replied lightly. 'I am anxious to know what you think of my poor rendering of such a pathetic subject?'

'What do you mean by this?' asked he, pointing to the dead face in the picture.

'That is "Elaine." Have you never read Tennyson?'

'The likeness, I mean!' exclaimed he. Then as I pretended not to understand him, he went on: 'That is my niece's portrait; you must have seen and conversed with her.'

'What would that have to do with this picture?'

'She has told you that wild story about Vivian Clare, and you have believed it.'

For a moment or two I hesitated whether to tell him or not of my moonlight interview with his niece. I dreaded the consequences of his anger to her, and would perhaps have tried to evade his inquiry, but he gave me no choice.

'Dr Stanmore,' said he hurriedly and nervously, 'are you aware that my poor unfortunate niece is mad?'

'Pardon me, sir; I have every reason to believe that statement incorrect.'

'I can prove it!' exclaimed he excitedly. 'Ask her how she came out to India; she cannot tell you. Ask her about the house in X. Street, where she declared Vivian Clare lived. Ask her about the picture which she said was in the Royal Academy. Delusions, sir, all delusions!'

'Not so,' replied I coldly. 'The picture at least cannot be a delusion.'

'How say you so?'

'That,' said I, pointing to the painting on the easel, 'is a copy of the original by Vivian Clare, now in the possession of a lady, a cousin of mine, in Calcutta.'

Norris Lorton grew white as death, his limbs trembled, and sinking into a chair, he buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud. 'Her father,' he moaned, 'was a dreadful scoundrel!'

'And you, sir, are his brother.'

Mr Lorton collapsed still more.

'Look here!' said I presently; 'you may as well hear everything. A few evenings after I first saw you, I met your niece by the river, and from her own lips heard of the infamously cruel treatment she had received at your hands and her father's. I own that at first I was in doubt as to her sanity; but I soon grew to regard her as a victim to other people's avarice. The painting, of which you see a copy here, confirmed my suspicions; and I now stand here convinced that Miss Lorton has been, and still is, a martyr to the most horrible villainy. She had no one to befriend her; she has no one now but me, and by heaven's help I will do all that is in my power to rescue her out of your hands.'

SOME CURIOSITIES IN LETTER-WRITING.

CHARACTERISTIC letters are always read with interest, and frequently with much amusement, by the student of human nature; and the few following specimens will, we think, repay perusal. The first we find in the Harleian Miscellany, and is 'a private letter sent from one Quaker to another.' It is quaintly prefaced thus: 'The following letter (which was really sent from a country Quaker to his friend in London), I here publish, not with design to reflect on the Quakers, but that the reader may see I am so impartial that I will insert everything wrote either by Church-

man, Presbyterian, or Quaker, &c., that I think deserves it.'

FRIEND JOHN—I desire thee to be so kind as to go to one of those sinful men in the flesh called an attorney, and let him take out an instrument, with a seal fixed thereunto; by means whereof we may seize the outward tabernacle of George Green, and bring him before the lambskin men at Westminster, and teach him to do as he would be done by: and so I rest thy friend in the light.

M. G.

In Seton's *Gossip about Letters and Letter-writers*, he says: 'About three years ago, I happened to come across a very solicitous epistle from a Midlothian farm-servant to a well-known photographer in the Scottish metropolis.' It is as follows:

M— MAINS, *Abriel* 26th '65.

MR A——. DARE SIR—I write to you in order to see if you are going to send my cards devisit or not for there is kno excuse for dull wether this mounth back for it has ben Good wether for other People geting theres down so if you intend to get my wones reddly sends them to me as quick as possible for i have looked for them this last mounth or if you dont send my cards you mus send the money for i have wated till i can wate no longer and if you dont send eathere the wone or the other i. [Then follows a full stop] so I will look for a ansure this week so i close and remain your truelay JOHN M——.

It has been said that the pith of a lady's letter is in the postscript, and as an illustration of this, Mr Seton tells us that a young lady having gone out to India, and writing home to her friends, concluded with the following words: 'P.S.—You will see by my signature that I am married.' That the same may sometimes be said of a gentleman's letter is proved by the subjoined, said to have been sent to the late Bishop of Norwich, Dr S——, in answer to an invitation given by him: 'Mr O——'s private affairs turn out so sadly that he cannot have the pleasure of waiting upon his lordship at his agreeable house on Monday next. N.B. His wife is dead.'

Here are one or two specimens of laconic epistles given by Mr Seton:

MY DEAR DORSET—I have just been married, and am the happiest dog alive. (*Signed*) BERKELEY.

Answer:

MY DEAR BERKELEY—Every dog has his day! (*Signed*) DORSET.

A young man when at college addressed his uncle, on whose liberality he entirely depended, as follows:

MY DEAR UNCLE—Ready for the needful.—Your affectionate Nephew.

To which the uncle replied:

MY DEAR NEPHEW—The needful is not ready.—Your affectionate Uncle.

Perhaps nothing is more amusing, from the absurdity of the thing, than the stiff 'overlooked' letters of children. I (the writer of this article) have amongst others the following, sent to me by an early friend of nine or ten, when I was not much older myself. Of course there had been pencil-lines very carefully erased, and the writing is remarkably small and neat.

MY DEAR FRIEND—It was my intention to write before now, but I have had so many engagements [fancy at that age!] that I could not make it convenient. I am happy to inform you that I have again commenced my half-year's studies, and feel it my duty to begin earnestly. I shall feel great pleasure in visiting you, dear S——, whenever I may be permitted, and shall be happy of your company again when your mother will be kind enough to allow you to come. Please send word whether you have begun school and how you are in health. Be kind enough to present our kind regards to Father, Mother, Sisters, and Brothers, and accept the warmest love of your affectionate friend, A. W. M——.

There is a postscript, which evidently was not 'overlooked,' as it is very crooked and very badly written: 'Please remind Sister B—— [my sister] of the pattern she mentioned to Sister M—— [her sister].'

The letters of foreigners with an imperfect knowledge of English are often very amusing. The following was written by a French Count visiting England.

C—— D——'s PRIORY, *Aug. 27,*

till Sept. 10, that I shall go at Lady E—— F——.

MY DEAR E——. i am shameful to have not had the pleasure to entertain you since you have with disdain abandon London; but the respect to which i am indebted for your eldest sister had oblige me to think of her Ladyship before you. i hope that you have a better weather during your excursions on the lacs than we have here; for almost every day the tunder is rolling upon our head with noise that should faint you, being as coward as a turkey; but what is more tiresome is the lamentations of peoples, which seeing the rains fall all the days, predict us with famine, plage, and civil wars, by the scarcity of bread, but it is a great error, for the harvest look very well. Be not surpriz'd i write so perfectly well in English; but since i am here, i speak and hear speaking all the day English; and during the nights, if some rats or mouses trouble me, i tell them Go lon, and they obey, understanding perfectly my English. Sir G——e is suffering with rheumatism. Lady H—— I——, who have the pretension to be a very good Physitian, but who is very ignorant, after that we have yesterday well breakfast, has given him a physic, and after we have dined she give him another and she desire that he take a walk *au clair de la lune*, in place of to be near good fire. No: a dog or cat would be more prudent. Before yesterday, the brother having eat and drank too much, and being tormented with a strong indigestion, my lady gave him 8 grains of James Powder: the unhappy brother was near to die, and one was obliged to send to a physicien at Folgate, who arriving, found him so well, that he judged it best to wait if the nature would save him or not; but happily

being a strong nature, he was restored. Lady H—the best of women is the worst of Physitien. She had killed some year ago a superb ox with James powder; and on another occasion, having received 24 turkeys very fatigued to have walked to foot a too long journey, she contrive to refresh them to give them some *huile de castor*; but 12 of that number died and the rest did look melancholy so long as they did live. I have receive at this moment a letter from Lady S——n. I put my thanks at her feet as the post go at 2 o'clock. I have not time to write to her ladyship, but I will comply soon with the liberty she gave me. Be sure that I have not forget Lady S——n in my prayers, though not so good as I could wish indeed. Believe the faithful friendship that I feel for you my dear sister-in-law, since that you were so much high than my finger. Write me often and my old wife. Believe me that I love a friendly letter more than a purse of guineas.—Yours,
COMTE DE C——z.

Mr Seton gives a love-letter written by a French sculptor, who went out of his mind for love of the young but cruel widow to whom it was addressed, and who only looked upon it as a witty joke.

DIVINE PEBBLE—Were you not harder than porphyry or agate, the chisel of my love, guided by the mallet of my fidelity, would have made some impression upon you. I, who have given every form to the roughest materials, had hoped that with the compass of reason, the saw of constancy, the fine file of friendship, and the polish of my words, I should have made of you one of the prettiest statues in the world. But, alas! you are but an insensible stone; and yet you fire my soul, yourself remaining cold as marble. Have pity on me; I no longer know what I say or do. When I have a dragon to sculpture, it is Cupid that rises under my chisel. Dear column of my hopes, pedestal of my happiness, cornice of my joy, if you make me happy, I will raise to you statues and pyramids. To-morrow I will call for your answer.
AUGUSTE.

In J. C. Young's *Journal* we find, amongst other amusing matters, the following entry: '1840, July 3d. I have been amused by a letter which has been sent me from a clerk to his rector. It would appear that the clerk had complained of the insignificant remuneration he had received for his services, and finding that there was no idea on the part of the rector or the churchwardens of raising his fees, he threw up his office in disgust. Subsequent reflection convinced him he had made a mistake. It was therefore in the spirit of penitence that he wrote the following extraordinary production to his rector:'

DEAR AND REV. SIR—I avail myself of the opportunity of troubling your honour with these blundered-up lines, which I hope you will excuse, and which is the very sentiments of your humble servant's heart. I ignorantly, rashly, but reluctantly, gave warning to leave your highly respected office and most amiable duty, as being your servant and clerk of this your most well-worked parish, and place of my succour and support. But, dear sir, I well know it was no fault of yours, nor any of my most worthy parishioners. It was because I thought I were not sufficiently paid for the interment of the silent dead. But will I be a

Judas, and leave the house of my God, the place where His honour dwelleth, for a few pieces of silver? No! Will I be a Peter, and deny myself of an office in His sanctuary, and cause myself to weep bitterly? No! Can I be so unreasonable as to deny, if I live and am well, the pleasure to ring that solemn toll that speaks the departure of a soul? No! Can I leave off digging the tombs of my neighbours and acquaintance, which have many a time made me shudder and think of my mortality, (especially when I have dug up the mortal remains of some one as I perhaps very well knew? No! Can I so abruptly forsake the services of my beloved church, which I have not failed to attend of every Sunday for this seven year and a half? No! Can I leave waiting upon you, a minister of that Being that sitteth between the cherubims, and flieth upon the wings of the wind? No! Can I leave the place where our most holy service calls forth, and says, 'Those whom God hath joined together (and being, as I am, a married man) let no man put asunder?' No! Can I leave that ordinance where you say, 'Thou and thus, I baptise thee in the name of, &c. &c.: and he becomes 'regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church?' No! Can I think of leaving off cleaning at Easter the house of God, in whom I take such delight, in looking down her aisles, and beholding her sanctuary and the table of the Lord? No! Can I forsake taking a part in the service of thanksgiving of women after childbirth, when mine own wife has been delivered these ten times? No! Can I leave off waiting on the congregation of the Lord, which you well know, sir, is my delight? No! Can I leave the table of the Lord, at which I have feasted a matter of, I daresay, full thirty times? No! And, dear sir, can I ever forsake you, who has ever been kind to me? No! And I well know 'you will entreat me not to leave you, neither to return from following after you: for where you pray, there will I pray; where you worship, will I worship; your church shall be my church, your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God.'

By the waters of Babylon am I to sit down and weep, and leave thee, O my church, and hang my harp upon the trees that grow in the yard? No! One thing have I desired of the Lord all the days of my life—to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple. 'More to be desired art thou, O my church, than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter to me than honey and the honey-comb.' Now think, sir, this is the very desire of my heart, still to wait upon you, which I hope you will find to be my delight as hitherto; but I unthinkingly and rashly said I would no longer; for which 'I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart.'

Now, if you think me worthy to wait upon you, please to tell the churchwardens that all is reconciled; and if not, 'I will get me away into the wilderness, and hide me in the desert in the clefts of the rocks;' but I hope still to be your Gehazi; and when I meet my Shunamite, to be able to say, 'All, all is well.' I will conclude my blunders with my oft-repeated prayer, that it may be 'as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'

Now, sir, I shall go on with my fees a same as I found them, and will make no more trouble about them; but I will not, I cannot, I must not

leave you nor my delightful duties.—Your most obedient servant,

Let us hope that the penitent clerk was reinstated, and was not obliged to get himself 'away into the wilderness.'

A WILD WESTERN ADVENTURE.

MANY years ago—upwards of twenty-five, I find on counting them over—when the eyes of nearly all adventurers in the States were attracted to the newly acquired Mexican possessions, and when wild stories were afloat of the fortunes to be made, and the power to be acquired in those little known but strangely fascinating regions, I found myself in the vanguard of what promised to be a movement of population toward the south-west, similar in character, if on a smaller scale, to that which was at the same time pressing overland to California. I was a young man then, and though making a fortune was of course uppermost in my mind, I was nearly as much influenced by the desire for adventure; and this it was perhaps that caused me to turn my steps toward the far southern frontier rather than to California. Stories were already coming back from the Golden State, of disappointment and overplus of population and famine; and it occurred to me that New Mexico—where, as I had heard, the early Spanish conquerors found the richest mines—gave surer promise both of easily acquired wealth and of more romantic and unique experiences.

I will confess at the start that, like most of the components of the vast caravan then surging westward, I little thought what a journey across the Plains meant. That it involved hardship, I knew, and that it was not less perilous than difficult; but of the precise nature of the obstacles to be encountered, I was fortunately, or unfortunately, in entire ignorance. It is necessary to remind the reader that what is now known as the 'Plains'—stretching from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the interior of Texas to the boundary-line of British America—was at that period a great open space on the maps, across which was written the legend, 'Great American Desert.' Geographers had in this case followed their immemorial usage of stigmatising as uncanny any region with which they are unacquainted; and mysterious terrors, borrowed from the experience of African explorers, brooded over some of the fairest portions of the continent. Genuine terrors there were in plenty, as the reader will presently see; but I can never recall without a smile my primitive idea of the vast wastes which lay between me and my then eagerly desired goal.

The foregoing paragraphs will explain under what influences and for what objects I found myself in St Louis early in the year 1850. The little city had suffered from several paroxysms of the 'California fever,' and was just beginning to settle down upon the conviction of its own brilliant destiny. Strangers were there in great numbers from all parts; but I soon discovered that nobody knew anything of the country 'beyond the settlements' in the direction I wanted to go. At first

I thought of descending the Mississippi to New Orleans, and then striking westward, and this I had far better have done; but I finally concluded to proceed to Fort Smith, on the extreme western border of Arkansas, procure a guide, and push directly for New Mexico.

The journey to Fort Smith, though tedious, was not difficult; and I had the good fortune, almost immediately on arriving there, to fall in with an experienced trapper and plainsman, who was more than willing to 'git away from the settlements' and make venture in new fields. This guide was a noteworthy character in his way. His name was James Mitchell; but he was almost universally known as 'Surly Jim,' a sobriquet which he had acquired by reason of his morose temper and repellent ways. I have never seen on a human countenance such an expression of grim and pervading discontent as he carried when I first met him, and he could certainly behave ugly enough when he chose; but I am convinced that his surliness was simply the spontaneous and irrepressible expression of his disgust at being crowded out of his hunting-grounds and scarcely less dear solitude, by the slowly rising tide of population. As soon as we had left civilisation behind us, the crust vanished like frost before the morning sun, and I have seldom had a more cheerful, entertaining, and good-natured companion than Mitchell proved himself during the trip about to be described. The sole point of misunderstanding between us was my pocket compass, for which I entertained a perhaps exaggerated respect, while Mitchell felt for it the aggressive contempt characteristic of old plainmen. It always provoked his wrath when I consulted that little monitor upon our route, though the service which it subsequently rendered in two or three emergencies compelled him to recognise that it was not altogether a device of the Evil One.

Our preparations for the journey were soon made. I was already the possessor of a good horse; Mitchell had one for his own use; and I bought two pack-mules for the transportation of our 'kit,' which consisted of a small wall-tent, a very few cooking utensils, and a supply of such articles of food as we were least likely to be able to obtain *en route*. To these I added a collection of such trade-goods as I thought most likely to be in demand in a new country unacquainted as yet with American manufactures. None of the animals was heavily burdened, and we expected to make, and in fact did make, good time. The first stage of the journey, from the Arkansas to the Red River, lay through the reservations of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, occupying the south-eastern portion of what is now the Indian Territory. It was traversed rapidly and with little difficulty, the Indians being even at that early date initiated into all the ways of civilisation, and living in a manner scarcely different from that of their white neighbours down east. They treated us amicably, though somewhat suspicious of our intentions; often gave us what we would willingly have bought; and seemed as eager as ourselves to speed us on our journey.

We crossed the Red River about twenty miles above the mouth of the Big Wichita, and then bearing a little south-of-west on a course nearly parallel with the latter stream, entered upon the unknown 'Desert' region of the maps. We were

now in a country where we were liable at any moment to fall in with roving or wild Indians, and I was speedily initiated into all the mysteries of plainsmen's craft. Mitchell, who had hitherto jogged along like any ordinary traveller, now became so extremely cautious in selecting our path and so incessantly alert and watchful, that it kept me at first in a constant fume of anxiety and alarm, which was only dissipated after several days by my becoming used to it and in a measure infected by it. Not a speck on the remote horizon, nor the faintest film of mist, nor the most insignificant mark on the ground, escaped his minute and careful scrutiny; and whenever we approached a slight elevation in the boundless and nearly level expanse of plain, he made me remain behind with the horses, and creeping forward alone to the summit, swept the horizon in all directions. An hour before sunset, if a favourable spot could be found, it was our custom to halt, picket the animals for grazing, and kindle a fire of dried buffalo-chips (which produce scarcely any smoke) for the preparation of our supper. As soon as it was dark, Mitchell carefully obliterated all traces of our fire, and saddling our horses, we went forward a mile or two to some sheltered locality, where we pitched our tent and settled down for the night. So much depended upon our horses, that we spared no pains in securing their safety. Mitchell's horse was an old stager, and only needed to have his halter attached to a wooden stake driven in the ground near the tent. My own horse and the two mules, besides being attached firmly to stakes, were provided with 'side-lines,' tying together the two legs on the same side and completely disabling them from running.

Much of this painstaking seemed to me superfluous at the time, and I confess that I rather fretted under it; but I have had some experience of Plains-life since then, and I am convinced that it saved our scalps. Without knowing it, we were exactly crossing the track of the great buffalo migration from the south, to their summer grazing-grounds on the northern plains. Though the movement for that season was well-nigh finished, we saw great numbers every day; and as the Indians always follow the buffalo route in order to secure their summer hunts, the wonder is that we did not run into their clutches a dozen times. On several occasions, indeed, we came upon indications of their close proximity, and often saw their signal-smokes on the horizon, but only once did we actually fall in with them. It was about the middle of the afternoon, and we were slowly ascending a gentle slope, when on arriving at the crest, we saw on the other side, and coming almost directly toward us, a party of nine mounted Comanches. They were not more than six hundred yards off, and it would have been impossible to avoid the meeting; but even if we had intended making the effort it would have been thwarted, for immediately on sighting them one of our mules gave out a most prodigious bray, which brought them all instantly to attention. Halting a moment to consult, they dashed off at a gallop in an oblique direction to our right, yelling like demons and brandishing their weapons. They evidently suspected there were more of us behind the slope, and wanted to gain its crest at a safe distance, instead of coming directly upon us. My first natural impulse on seeing that there was to be a

fight at such odds, was to seek a sheltered position, and I urged Mitchell to enter a rocky thicket which lay a short distance to our left. Instead, he shouted to me to keep close up, and galloped back about a quarter of a mile on the track we had come, to a broad and perfectly level space. In the centre of this he dismounted, put the side-lines on the horses, tied their heads close together, and then taking his gun on his arm, sat down on the ground between them and the Indians, telling me to do the same. Seeing this, the Indians consulted together again, and forming into a compact body, galloped furiously toward us, uttering such yells as I had never before heard, and giving me the impression that they would ride right over us. When they were about two hundred yards away, Mitchell raised his rifle; and instantly each man threw himself on the side of his horse and circled back to the starting-point. This manoeuvre was repeated about half-a-dozen times, until, contrary to Mitchell's orders, I fired and wounded one of the ponies. This inspired them with such respect for our weapons that they did not again come within range, but divided into groups, and examined the ground on every side, in search of some point where they could approach under cover. Finding none, they again came together, watched us intently for a while, and then turning tail, galloped off. I supposed we had done with them, and wanted to resume our journey; but Mitchell only made the horses more secure, and quietly resumed his position. In about half an hour the Indians reappeared on the part of the crest nearest us, and dashed down, yelling worse than ever, and shaking blankets and buffalo robes. The object of this manoeuvre was to stampede our horses; but Mitchell had rendered this impossible, and speedily discovering the fact, the rascals galloped off once more and disappeared.

It was growing dark by this time; and knowing how easy it would be to creep upon us under cover of the darkness, I fully expected a night attack; but Mitchell rightly assured me that Indians would not attack at night, and that we had seen the last of them. I could not understand this at the time, and my trusty guide could tell me nothing beyond the mere fact; but I have since learned that one of the common superstitions of the Plains Indians is that a man killed in the dark will dwell in darkness throughout eternity. This is for the white man a most fortunate belief, for the characteristic Indian qualities are precisely of the kind which make night attacks terrible.

Another quality of the Indians which is fortunate for their white antagonists is also exemplified in the foregoing anecdote. If we had taken to cover, as I wished, we should probably have been scalped in ten minutes; for his knowledge of the ground, and his wonderful skill in profiting by its inequalities, give the Indian overwhelming advantages in such a contest. While adventurous enough, however, in availing himself of any advantages which his superior craft gives him, the Indian has no relish for a fair stand-up fight, in which blood is certain to be shed on both sides. Superiority of numbers seems to have no effect in diminishing this repugnance, for each Indian thinks *he* is the one that will be killed, and an Indian has no more fondness for being killed or wounded than a white man. The raising of a single rifle is often sufficient to stop a party of thirty or forty charging

in full career; and only the largest war-party will run directly upon two or three well-armed men, who have taken a favourable position in the open. Such a party they consider 'bad medicine.'

Four or five days after our adventure with the Indians, we found ourselves approaching the eastern border of the Llano Estacado or Staked Plain, and were congratulating each other on the excellent progress made, when a catastrophe occurred which put a peremptory end to our westward journey, and seemed more than likely at the time to put an end to our lives. We had halted as usual for supper, and then pitched our tent just on the verge of a deep, wide, and somewhat precipitous ravine, at the bottom of which ran a small stream of water. Mitchell's horse was picketed just in rear of the tent; mine and the mules about a dozen yards off. We sat up rather late that night, and when I turned in I took less than the usual care to have my gun, &c. convenient, but by a great piece of good fortune kept on my coat, vest, and socks. Shortly after midnight, Mitchell shook me by the arm; and sitting up and obeying his injunction to listen, I heard a low continuous roaring sound like the noise of a distant cataract, but steadily increasing in volume. I was utterly bewildered, and we lost many precious moments in trying to make out what it was; but at last Mitchell rushed from the tent, and drawing on my boots I followed. The roar was much more distinct now; and turning toward the broad prairie whence it came we could see a wavering black line approaching rapidly, and steadily increasing both in width and blackness. One appalled look revealed to us the nature of the phenomenon—an immense herd of stamped buffalo was rushing directly upon us with tremendous speed and irresistible force. The advance line was not more than three hundred yards distant, so there was no time even to think of a plan of escape, much less to carry it out. For myself I could only gaze at the surging mass with a sort of horrid fascination, and I scarcely saw Mitchell as he flung down his gun and ran to the tent, striking matches as fast as he could and applying them to the grass and tent-cloth. Fortunately the grass was very dry and the cloth inflammable, and almost instantly the entire tent was in a blaze. Then seizing me by the shoulder, Mitchell dragged me to the verge of the bluff directly in front of the tent, and we both fell rather than jumped to a ledge just beneath. As we went over, my powder-can in the tent exploded with a prodigious report, and a moment afterwards the first ranks of the buffalo plunged down the declivity, not ten yards distant on each side of us. Every moment for what seemed hours I expected to feel the fatal tramp of the huge beasts as they rushed over the bank above our heads; but the fire and the noise of the explosion had split the frantic herd scarcely twenty yards away, and the two divergent streams thundered harmlessly by into the darkness. Swift as were their movements, they were upwards of five minutes in passing, and Mitchell himself estimated that there could not have been less than five thousand animals in this stampede.

When the tumultuous roar had subsided again into a faint and rapidly vanishing murmur, we clambered up the bank; and the scene which met our eyes might well strike us with dismay. On

the spot where our tent had stood was a glowing bed of embers and ashes; while scattered about in every direction, whither they had been driven by the explosion, were pots, kettles, and the hardware truck with which I had designed to trade. Of our blankets and clothing hardly a vestige remained; every item of our ammunition had been destroyed; and the woodwork of my gun and pistol was completely burned away. Mitchell's rifle had fallen in the track of the buffalo and was trodden into a shapeless mass of iron. Flour, salt, coffee, all had fed the flames; and the sole residue of our stock, not discovered till the morning, was a large tin box full of crackers (biscuits). Saddest of all, our animals were also lost. Mitchell's horse lay dead just behind the tent, killed probably by the shock of the explosion. My horse and the mules, paralysed with fright and unable to break away, had been trodden by the buffalo into an unrecognisable mass of pulp.

As if Fortune had not already done her worst, Mitchell was apprehensive lest the fire and smoke should bring the Indians upon us, and dragged me down to the densest thickets at the bottom of the ravine, where, strange to say, I at once fell asleep, and slept soundly till sunrise. In the morning we made two important discoveries: first, that five buffalo had been killed in the desperate scramble across the ravine; second, that a large tin box filled with crackers had preserved its contents unharmed. As soon as we made these discoveries we sat down to consider our situation and to decide upon our future course. Between us and our contemplated destination in New Mexico lay the great Staked Plain, utterly impassable to any one on foot. To retrace our steps towards the Red River was to invite almost certain death by starvation and to run terrible risks from the Indians, now on their summer migration northwards. It was finally decided that our best chance lay in pushing south-east for the settlements in Northern Texas. The chief danger in this direction, as we estimated it, lay in our utter ignorance of the intervening country and the probable scarcity of water; but an effort must be made, and this seemed to promise better than any other.

Our resolution being formed, it only remained to devise the ways and means of carrying it out; and the first step was to secure, if possible, an adequate amount of food for the journey. The crackers would last but a few days if we depended on them alone; and having no weapon of any kind except a couple of hunter's knives, we could not depend on getting any game *en route*; but the dead buffaloes seemed to offer ample store of food if we could only utilise them; and here Mitchell's knowledge of Plains-craft was once more of inestimable advantage. The Plains Indians live almost exclusively upon buffalo-meat, which they procure in their summer hunts, and prepare by drying it thoroughly in the sun, pounding it to powder between two stones, and packing it away in air-tight skins. We could not spare the time for this process, for every day of a meagre and limited diet would diminish our strength, while every hour increased the danger of being discovered by passing Indians. Under Mitchell's direction, therefore, we contrived a more expeditious method. Selecting the leanest and juiciest

meat, we cut it into long and thin strips, spread it in the sun upon a rudely constructed platform, and built under it a fire of green wood, which kept it constantly enshrouded in smoke. By this means we had at the end of two days and nights about fifty pounds of tolerably well-preserved meat, which, if dry and tough and flavourless, would at least sustain life. In the meantime we had recovered several uninjured bottles from the wreck of the tent; and these, for the purpose of carrying water, Mitchell covered with buffalo-skin tied on with raw-hide thongs; so that on the morning of the third day we were ready to start with about five pounds of crackers, as much dried meat as we could comfortably carry, and a gallon or so of water.

A detailed account of our journey would not be without interest perhaps, if I could recall it with sufficient vividness, but it was singularly free from adventurous episodes; and though infinitely fatiguing and not without privations, involved less of downright suffering than was to have been expected. Suffice it to say, that after a fortnight's somewhat devious wanderings, we found ourselves approaching the frontier settlements, and before reaching them fell in with a body of United States' troops en route from Texas to New Mexico. I easily obtained permission to accompany them; and so at last, in a roundabout way, reached my original destination. Mitchell preferred to return to Arkansas, where, as I have heard, he entered the government service, and rendered valuable service to the army as scout and guide.

I may observe in conclusion that the adventure I have described was not an altogether exceptional one. For many years after the period of which I write, buffalo 'stampedes' constituted one of the characteristic dangers of travel on the Plains. The barbarous slaughter that has been going on since 1871, however, has not only completely eliminated this danger, but has rendered it certain that the American bison will soon be as extinct as the other strange animals whose fossil remains are found throughout the whole length and breadth of the Plains.

GRAVE-DIGGING BEETLES.

ONE of the wonderful provisions of Nature is the existence of certain beetles, with the function of digging graves for dead rats, moles, birds, and other small creatures left upon the surface of the earth, and the effluvia from which might be offensive and baleful. Beetles of this kind are known as the *Necrophorus Germanicus*. About these remarkable animals, Mr Gleditch, an entomologist, has given us several interesting and curious particulars. Being desirous to test the strength of the grave-diggers, he provided a glass vessel half-filled with moist earth, into which he put four beetles with a dead linnet. No alarm was shewn by the captives. Apparently intent on the one sole object of their existence, they began immediately to inspect the bird; and then commenced the digging of a hollow underneath it, removing the earth, and shovelling it away on each side. This was accomplished by leaning strongly upon their collars, bending down their heads, and working with singleness of purpose. After labouring for nearly two hours, one of the beetles was driven away and not allowed to

work again. This Mr Gleditch concluded was a female, as it was smaller than the others, who continued their labour, until one by one they ceased, leaving only one beetle at his work. *Five hours* more hard work were given by the remaining beetle, who at last sank exhausted on the earth and rested from his task, and finally, suddenly rousing himself, stiffened his collar, and by an extraordinary effort of strength, lifted up the bird and arranged it within the spacious grave. In three days the grave was finished, and the bird safely deposited within its narrow limits.

During a space of fifty days, these busy workers interred the bodies of four frogs, three small birds, two grasshoppers, and one mole. This singular occupation, which continues from the middle of April until the end of October, proceeds from an instinctive desire for the preservation of their offspring. Eggs deposited by the parent in the substances which they inter, when hatched, produce larvæ, which, feeding on the carrion which surrounds them, grow to an inch in length. These in their turn change into yellow chrysalids, and lastly into beetles; and the latter, when emerged from the earth, begin to dig graves and inter dead animals for the benefit of another generation.

In September 1877, the writer had unexpectedly an opportunity of making the acquaintance of these curious insects. Two of the grave-digging beetles made their appearance in one of two underground kitchens, in the window of which stood a very large pot filled with mould prepared for the reception of plant-cuttings. To this pot the insects made their way, and at once began casting up the earth. On being observed, they were provided with a dead mouse, and set to work exactly in the manner described by Mr Gleditch; but as soon as they became tired and rested from their labour, they were carried into the adjoining kitchen and placed close to the fireplace. The following morning discovered them again at work, having travelled to their former quarters during the night; and again they laboured perseveringly till the body of the mouse gradually disappeared. At the end of the second day, it was neatly covered in, and the insects were turned out of their home and again placed in the back kitchen. Meanwhile, the body of the mouse was removed; but on the following morning the beetles had returned to their flower-pot, and were again burrowing in search of the dead mouse, throwing out nearly the whole of the mould in their untiring efforts. Finally, as a reward for their industry and perseverance, they were transferred to the garden and placed close to the dead mouse, which they at once began to bury afresh. Doubtless there is much of poetry as well as kindly feeling associated with this plodding insect.

And thus from sire to son, through circling years,
Labour these watchful creatures, noting well
If falls a small bird from the bending spray,
Or mole tost out by ruthless hands, his home
Laid waste, himself a corpse, where late he wrought
With patient toil, his humble shed to rear;
Or brown mouse, sleeping his last sleep, beside
Some tuft of wild thyme: all and each are borne
From curious ken, and laid the earth beneath
With decent care.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.